

The Devil in the Devil

by CaptainMonochrome

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Summary: Matt gets possessed by a demon. It doesn't go how the demon expected. Azirale thinks some human is pretty cocky parading around calling himself the Devil, so they decide to teach the punk a lesson. It does not go as planned. So now Az is stuck sharing a body with this reckless Catholic superhero, battling criminals, witches, and - oh great, now the Winchesters are here, too.

1. Chapter 1

Azirale had heard the stories. Every demon in New York had.

A man dressed in red, with horns, parading around Hell's Kitchen calling himself the Devil.

It was ridiculous. It was disrespectful. It was hilarious.

Some demons were indignant about it. Azirale knew one dude who had actually chased the guy down and subsequently had his ass handed to him. Apparently fighting common low-level demons wasn't too much of a hassle for the Daredevil. Other demons weren't too bothered by it. It didn't actually have anything to do with them, after all. He was just a human, caught up in human affairs. Azirale suspected he might be a little more than human, but they kept that thought to themselves.

The world hadn't gotten stranger these past few years, like every mortal kept saying - humans were just finally becoming aware of how the strange the world had always been. To a century old demon like himself, however, gods and aliens and super-powered humans weren't all that surprising. They didn't particularly care about any of it.

That's what they told themselves, but as they sat in the bar watching the latest news footage of Daredevil's tail end of a fight with some gang, they found their teeth grating.

They couldn't blame the guy for a name the press had given him, but he had really embraced the whole Devil persona.

Because, come on, _horns?_

As if that's what demons really looked like.

Calling him devil because - what, he broke a few arms? Put a couple people in comas?

As if that's the worst demons could do.

They slammed their glass back down on the counter and got up, leaving the bar without paying. The bartender glanced their way, then averted his eyes and continued his business. Smart guy. Some humans could tell when to back down.

Some didn't. Sometimes they had to flash their eyes in warning. And if that didn't work, Az wasn't afraid to get violent. They enjoyed it as much as the next demon, they supposed, but most of the time it seemed like too much effort. Torment had gotten old.

Luckily, they didn't have to follow that line of thought to wherever the fuck it was headed, because the bartender hadn't challenged him, and now they needed to think about what to do next. They were standing on the dark street, lamplight and neon reflecting jagged and broken in puddles of rainwater on the sidewalk. The wind was cold, whipping around his legs and snaking up his back, but of course they didn't mind. They couldn't really feel the cold, not the way they knew humans could. All they could feel right now was immensely bored.

Bored and pissed off.

Pissed off that some human in a fancy suit with some fancy moves thought he could call himself a devil without knowing what it meant to be a devil. What you had to go through. What a terrible thing it was to exist.

Az shook his head - there they went again, falling down that rabbit hole.

They needed a distraction.

They glanced back at the bar, still dimly able to hear the television from where he was standing.

They thought he had something in mind.

It didn't take them long to track the Daredevil down.

Demons always knew where trouble was brewing. And Hell's Kitchen wasn't that large a place.

* * *

><p>Things had been getting weird in Hell's Kitchen.<p>

And for Matt, that was saying a lot.

He could handle aliens falling from the sky, shadowy organizations, ninjas, crime lords, superheroes - he could handle just about anything. But a cloud of unease had fallen across the city these past few weeks. Something was coming. He could feel it in the air, crackling like electricity, humming through the street, waiting. Watching. It prickled across his skin, stung his nose.

And then the freaks starting showing up.

The first Matt encountered seemed like fairly normal human. He had been following Matt through the dark alleyway for some time, and no matter how Matt ducked and dodged and scaled buildings or leaped across the rooftops, that heartbeat was always right behind him, strangely calm and steady. He knew the guy had to be booking it to keep up with Matt, but his heartbeat remained even the entire time. That's when Matt first knew something was off.

He knew Foggy would shout at him for this later, but he took a stand on a rooftop and waited for his pursuer to catch up.

The dark didn't seem to be a hindrance to the guy, who clambered up on the rooftop without a problem - Matt thought he might have enhanced strength. Nothing like Captain America or the Hulk, but it was something. He readjusted his stance, on guard.

"Why are you following me? Who are you?"

"I'm here to teach you a lesson," the man growled, surging forward.

He didn't put up much of a fight. Like Matt had suspected, he had some measure of super strength, but didn't know how to properly use it. He swung wildly and left himself wide open - Matt got a few good hits in, and the guy stumbled.

Once again, no measurable reaction - no spike in heartbeat, he didn't even seem to be out of breath.

The man came again, faster this time - it almost caught Matt by surprise but he ducked under the attack and caught the man in the ribs again, striking him in the same spot. This time he definitely heard the bones crack.

But again - no reaction.

Matt frowned. Super strength and...something else? Healing?

He cocked his head and listened, dodging another clumsy attack - no, the ribs were still scraping and jostling against each other. No healing factor.

Could he just not register pain, then?

Matt would just have to incapacitate him then.

His moment of distraction cost him - the man barreled into his side, tossing him across the roof. Matt managed to land in a roll and stumble to his feet. His breath had been knocked out of him, and it took him a moment to orient himself. The man was coming again.

Yeah, didn't want to take another hit from that guy.

Matt focused all his senses and energy, and when the man came into range, he lunged. He used the man's momentum against him, flipping him face-first onto the roof. Before he had a chance to get up, Matt grabbed his leg and lifted it up, twisting, then brought his other foot down on the man's knee.

He heard the bone snap.

No palpable reaction from the man except a frustrated curse.

For good measure, Matt broke his other leg, then bailed and left the man shouting curses at him from the roof.

His heartbeat was still slow and steady as ever; Matt's, on the other hand, was racing.

After that he had run into a few others like the man. Always the steady heartbeats, calm, even breaths, the stink of sulfur and blood strong on their bodies. Fast, in humanely strong, no reaction to pain. Unhindered by the darkness. He thought they might prefer it, actually. Once, two had cornered him on an empty street - two streetlights were buzzing overhead. One of the freaks snapped their fingers, and the buzzing stopped. Matt assumed the light went out, and they were trying to scare him, or use the dark to their advantage. He didn't stick around to find out, instead bailing to avoid a fight.

Okay, so at least one of them had some sort of power over electricity.

He really needed to do some serious investigation into these freaks.

Great. It wasn't like he already had enough on his plate.

Some new big name had sprung up in Hell's Kitchen, dipping their hands into all sorts of criminal pools. People were being snatched off the street. Rates of missing people were rising at alarming rates. It wasn't human trafficking, which just made Matt think whatever they were doing with these kidnapped people might be even worse.

Together, he and Foggy and Karen had managed to find a name with a loose connection to the recent spree of organized crime cutting through the city - Bouvois. A private entrepreneur with a hand in a number of shady businesses with even shadier books.

Matt was on his way to investigate one of the warehouses bought by Bouvois, when he ran into another one.

Well, first he ran into a group of men that caught him by surprise. They didn't seem connected - one was a security guard, still in uniform, another was a plumber, another a businessman of some sort. But they were all tall and muscular, dowsed in sweat, insane amounts of adrenaline pumping through their systems, hearts racing towards cardiac arrest. They came loping down the street like a pack of dogs, surrounding him and - yeah, some of them were actually growling.

"Hello, boys," Matt said uneasily, letting his radar sense wash over them in all directions. Something was definitely wrong here - he had the impression these men weren't exactly in control, and he didn't want to hurt them - but he didn't think he would have much of a choice.

In the brief seconds before the first man lunged, Matt heard another heartbeat enter the scene. Perched on the fire escape, swinging her legs, smelling of sulfur. One of them.

"Did you do this?" Matt demanded, facing the freak.

"Me? Ha - no. But someone definitely has it out for you," they answered.

Matt didn't have any more time to chat - the first man was attacking, and then they all came.

The fight lasted longer than he wanted. It probably would have gone on a lot longer, except the attackers started dropping all by themselves. Heart attacks.

Through his own racing heart and ragged breaths, Matt heard the freak in the fire escape let out a low whistle.

"Whoo, whoever sent those chumps underestimated you! Poor bastards - probably don't even know what happened."

Matt leaned against a wall, the rough brick gritty beneath his torn sleeve. Just like he thought - it had been mind control, or something. He had heard about the case with the PI and the mind controller, Kilgrave. But he had died. Could there be someone else like him?

He didn't have time to think about that - all the men had fallen, their hearts giving out within seconds of each other. Matt fished his phone out and dialed the cops. If he left them here like this, they would die.

"Oh, what a good Samaritan. Really, and you have the balls to call yourself the Devil."

Right. They were still here.

"Do you know who did this?" Matt said. It was the first time he had really spoken to one of them.

The freak jumped down from the fire escape, landing effortlessly like she had hopped down from a curb.

"No, not really. I mean, I have some ideas, but I don't really care. I'm here for you."

Matt sighed. Of course.

_Hello? 911. _A tinny voice echoed out of his phone.

He growled their location into the phone before snapping it shut and facing his new opponent.

"You want to go?" He held his fists up.

The freak barked a laugh, "You couldn't take me right now, and you know it."

"Let's see about that," Matt answered. He knew they were probably right, but he wasn't going to admit that. The other of their kind he had faced always seemed unbalanced, rash, all brute force and no finesse. This one, though, was different. She took her time picking its way towards Matt, easy, unbothered. Confident.

Yet the closer it got to Matt, the faster their heart beat. But not out of fear...it was angry.

"Why do you call yourself the Devil?"

"I didn't come up with it - it just kind of stuck."

"Yeah, but you really embraced it, didn't you? I mean, the horns and all."

"It helps to have an image."

"An image people fear?"

Matt nodded.

The freak laughed.

Suddenly their voice was right next to him, whispering in his ear, sending him stumbling back in surprise.

"Well, how does it feel? Are you afraid?"

Matt attacked, throwing out a flurry of punches and kicks before jumping on top of the dumpster and onto the fire escape. He knew his blows had connected, but the freak had acted like he was giving her a light pat on the back, not debilitating blows to vital points in their body.

In the next instant, she had leaped up onto the fire escape, hands wrapping around the rusty railing and leaning across to sneer, he assumed, in his face.

However, before any more words or blows could be exchanged, the fire escape jostled. It tilted. There was the sound of wrenching metal, then they were both falling.

Matt landed hard against the pavement, curling up into a ball and covering his head as metal crashed around him.

When everything quieted down, he assessed his surroundings. Part of the fire escape had come away when the freak jumped on it, the rusted railing unable to bear her weight. None of the unconscious men seemed to have been injured seriously.

The freak, thoughâ€¦|

A piece of rusty metal was sticking through their chest, piercing

their heart.

No beat, no breath. Dead.

He held his head, trying to regain control of his senses. He heard sirens in the distance - the police would be here soon. He needed to get away.

"The police are on their way, huh?"

He froze. The dead body of the freak was standing, moving, talking. There was still no heartbeat. Because the bar of metal was still sticking through their heart.

"I guess it's time we get out of here, huh?"

Matt was starting to think he had hit his head harder than he thought. His senses weren't working right. That body was definitely dead. He could smell it.

"How are you?"

He cut himself off as suddenly the freak's body collapsed, now well and truly dead.

Something cold and frightening washed over Matt, sending his hair on end. He could detect the faint sound of wind, the strong smell of sulfur and death, but nothing else. Whatever was happening - and he didn't doubt something was happening - was undetectable through his senses. But he could feel it in his bones, in his blood - and it was telling him to run.

He turned to flee, but in the next instant the smell of sulfur and death and the cold had overtaken him. It crashed into him, overwhelming his senses. Everything was at once muffled and clouded and blaring and flaming. Something was in his mouth, his nose, his throat, burning and suffocating him as it spread throughout his body, forcing him deeper and deeper into himself.

He was drowning in darkness. That wasn't right - he was always in darkness, but this was different. This was true, tangible darkness. It was palpable. Something he could taste, something that was pressing against him on all sides, wrapping him up, burying him.

He struggled against it, and suddenly the fire was there, burning at him. Laughing at him.

"This is what it is to be a devil, _Daredevil_. Welcome to hell."

The voice - which he realized with horror, was coming from _his own head_ - started laughing maniacally. Then abruptly, the voice stopped laughing. There was a moment of quiet, and Matt was drowning and burning.

He heard the voice speak again, "What the actual fuck."

Okay, first off, this motherfucker was blind?

Second off - what the fuck?

Azirale had suspected Daredevil had some sort of superpower or enhancement or mutation or whatever it was humans had these days - but this was just bullshit. The world was screaming around them. Deafening. The wind was like knives on his skin, the cloth of his suit like sandpaper, the approaching police sirens felt like they were going to shatter his skull any moment.

They knew they were standing in the alley, surrounded by dead or dying bodies and broken bits of fire escape, they knew this, but suddenly they had lost all sense of direction and place.

Somewhere a baby was crying. There weren't any babies in the alley...then they heard a TV set snap on, could smell someone cooking curry, hear someone moan in the middle of an orgasm. Slowly, too slowly, they realized all these sounds and smells were coming from the buildings around them.

Shit! They clapped his hands over his ears, but it didn't help.

They didn't need to know what was going on three blocks over - they needed to get out of this alleyway.

Just then, Az felt something tug deep in their gut. It was painful.

They stumbled to the wall and fell to their knees. Was this body sick? Was it trying to vomit?

The painful pulling sensation came again, and Azirale coughed, gagging. They clapped a hand to Daredevil's mouth, horrified to see a bit of black smoke puff away before darting back into Daredevil's lips.

Was...was this human trying to push Azirale out?

This had been a bad idea.

But they weren't about to let this mortal punk get the better of them.

Trying to remember the location of the roof approximate to their current position, Azirale did their best to cancel out all the distractions and just made a wild leap for it. They felt the air cutting past their exposed skin, the rush of it roaring in their ears - they had no clue where the roof actually was...except they did. Something about the way the wind flow changed around their body, the way sounds were bouncing around them - they could tell the roof was a few feet to their left and slightly above them. And they were about to collide with the edge of the building.

Desperately, they shot a hand out towards where they thought they could sense the roof. There was contact, though the rest of their body slammed painfully into the brick side of the building.

Below, the police had just reached the alley. They could smell the powder of their guns, hear their footsteps bouncing against the walls

of the alley, their heartbeats.

They didn't want to focus on that, though - they wanted to get on this goddamn roof so they could properly control this body they had just possessed.

They managed to haul Daredevil over the edge and fall to the gravelly floor of the roof with a dull thud. And they just lay there for a moment. They needed to process.

Okay. So Daredevil was blind. But he had super enhanced senses - that explained how he got around, and fought the way he did. Azirale just needed to figure out how to properly use Daredevil's senses, and they could get on with...with whatever they were doing.

Why had they decided possessing Daredevil was a good idea again?

Something about teaching him a lesson.

What it really meant to be a devil.

That would have to wait - right now he needed to learn how to be...

Azirale paused, searching through his new vessel's mind for a moment. It felt nice to focus inward instead of on the blaring world outside.

Right now, Azirale needed to learn how to be..._Matt._

Matt Murdock.

A few memories flashed through Matt's mind, and Azirale tried to get a proper grasp on them - an office, an image of a boxer, the feeling of braille beneath his fingers, a few names - but before Azirale could sort through the influx of information, the memories were snatched back. A wall went up between Azirale and the rest of Matt's mind.

Huh. Interesting.

And frustrating.

At least Matt wasn't trying to push Azirale out anymore, though.

No, now Azirale was focused. They were getting comfy in this body. Just laying flat on his back, cautiously prodding at Matt's mental block, trying to get more information from his host, letting the challenge distract him from the onslaught of sensory input pounding at the other side of their mind.

They knew as soon as they turned their focus back towards the outside world, though, their grip on Matt's body would get weaker. This guy was the most strong-willed human Azirale had ever possessed. If he gathered enough strength, and Azirale was distracted enough, they knew Matt could probably expunge them from his body.

And they weren't going to let that happen. Because even if Matt had the strongest will of any human Azirale had encountered, it was

nothing compared to their own stubbornness.

So, reluctantly, he left Matt's mind alone and instead turned his focus outwards once again.

They immediately winced.

Loud, isn't it?

What the - vessels weren't supposed to talk back.

Azirale immediately focused inwards again - but that mental wall was still up. It occurred to them that Matt must have had some sort of training to deal with possession, or mind control, at least. That would make things challenging.

They smiled - they definitely weren't bored now.

* * *

><p>Matt felt distant from everything. Muffled. But he was still there.<p>

After the initial shock of having his body taken over by some foreign entity, and getting past the burning/suffocating darkness and panic, he remembered Stick's training. He could feel the _thing_ settling into his skin, his bones, controlling his muscles like a puppet. He could also feel it's confusion. His senses, which he had learned to organize into carefully constructed chaos, were all over the place. The thing had no idea how to control them, how to focus, how to use them to _see_. It was also probably thrown off by the fact that Matt could not, in fact, see.

It stumbled around, or he stumbled around - pronouns got confusing when possession was involved. It stumbled around for a moment, trying to get a handle on everything, and Matt could sense it's disorientation in his own body.

He wasn't sure what it was, but he could feel it. Feel the darkness, feel his own body like a memory - and he pushed back.

The thing winced, crumpling against a wall.

Matt felt himself becoming more present in his body once again, the familiar warmth and hum of his bones and muscles becoming clear. He tried to take them back.

The thing gagged, covering its mouth.

Matt felt clarity for a moment, and then abruptly he was shoved back into darkness and fog as the thing reasserted control over his body and made a wild jump at the roof.

They almost didn't make it, but luckily they managed to haul his body out of site as the police arrived.

That's when it started trying to read his mind.

Matt had trained for this. Stick had taught him how to meditate, how to control his own mind, how to protect it against invaders. Matt had

been skeptical - mind readers? Really? - but had diligently trained, obeying Stick's orders.

God, was he glad of that now.

He constructed a wall in his mind, careful to control his thoughts, keep them inside the wall, keep them protected, away from the infringing darkness.

The thing didn't give up, though, prodding into his mind like a song stuck in his head, or an unwanted memory that popped up when you smelled a certain scent. But he was ready. It wasn't getting anything from him. It wasn't getting Foggy, or Karen, or Claire. He didn't know what it wanted, exactly, but he knew it wasn't good.

The thing seemed to give up, and in the next moment Matt felt his senses flood back in - loud and sharp and rank, how they used to be when he first woke up in the hospital as a kid.

Azirale winced.

Because suddenly Matt knew the thing's name was Azirale.

He supposed if you were sharing a body, the mind-reading thing went both ways.

Maybe...maybe he could communicate with it.

He knew it was dangerous - allowing any sort of contact between his mind and this thing, Azirale, could potentially lead to Azirale getting past Matt's mental defenses. But he had to try - he had to know what was going on.

"Loud, isn't it?"

Azirale, in Matt's body, froze. Then it grinned with Matt's lips.

You're handling this very well - being possessed by a demon and all. Usually my vessels are a little less calm, and more...screaming and crying? Or dying - that happens too.

Matt didn't answer back, instead putting his wall back up. A demon.

Right.

Aliens, shadowy organizations, ninjas, crime lords, superheroes - and demons.

He supposed that's what he got for adopting the name Daredevil.

"Why are you doing this?"

_You were annoying me. I wanted to teach you a lesson. _

"What lesson?"

_If you're going to call yourself the Devil, I wanted you to know what that meant. _

"How's it going so far?"

Matt knew he probably shouldn't be sarcastic when talking to the demon that was currently possessing his body, but it just slipped out. Fortunately, all Azirale did was sit up - moving Matt's body more like a zombie with rigor mortis than a living human being.

Your superpower sucks.

Matt laughed. He actually laughed - his lips moved, and sound escaped. It wasn't exactly his laugh, but for a second he had controlled his own body.

Then Azirale was back in control, and he froze again. A low growl escaped his throat - it felt strange to hear his voice, and now he wasn't the one speaking.

Below, Matt could hear the police on their radios, calling an ambulance, making reports. He could hear their heartbeats, and the heartbeats of the downed men that had attacked him. He wondered if Azirale knew anything about that - but he would have to find out later. Because not all of the men's hearts were still beating. Plus there was the dead body that Azirale had been possessing earlier. They needed to get out of here.

"We need to leave," Azirale said.

_We're on the same page there. _

"Then help me - I can't control your stupid powers yet."

Why don't you just leave, and we can go our separate ways?

"I'm not leaving. And if you don't help me, then Daredevil is going to get charged with murder, and everyone will find out your true identity. I can't imagine that's what you want."

Matt growled - or he would have, but Azirale wasn't give him an inch when it came to control. So he just remained a voice in his own head.

_Fine. _

Azirale jumped to his feet, and the world spun around them.

"So how do we do this?"

You'll have to give me control.

"And you try to push me out again? No thanks."

I can't resist you and concentrate on my senses at the same time. Besides, this was your idea.

Azirale grunted assent, and Matt felt his head clearing. It was like waking up out of a dream, or taking headphones off after listening to a book for hours. The world became sharp and defined around him once again, and he wanted to let out a sigh of relief. Unfortunately,

Azirale didn't let him have that much control. He realized his breathing and heart rate were remaining at the same steady rates he had heard in the other freaks - which he now realized had all been humans possessed by demons.

He let the world in - all the sounds, smells, tastes, tangible sensations; the echoes bouncing off walls and rooftops, the chill wind, the slight dampness in the air from a recent rain, the smell of steam and garbage and night air, the taste of blood in the air. He organized it all, placing them in space, orienting his world around him.

"That's much better," Azirale said.

Their voice was Matt's voice, but it wasn't - the intonation and timbre were off, lower, gruffer. It sounded more like his "Daredevil" voice, but slightly more nasal. No one would probably really notice the difference, except Matt himself. Or Foggy. Foggy would definitely notice.

"Where are we going? You won't let me in that iron lock box of yours," Azirale asked.

Matt hesitated. He really didn't want a demon in his home. But they needed to get out of here.

I'll guide us. Just follow my lead.

"We'll see how that goes, for now," Azirale huffed.

After that they didn't talk much. Their minds were in sync, to some extent. Just like how you didn't think about moving your arm to scratch an itch, or move your legs to walk - you just did it.

They got a running start and leaped off the roof.

And they _flew_.

Not literally, though Matt really wasn't sure what demon powers included. But they sailed through the air, landing on a rooftop three buildings away. The concrete cracked slightly under their feet.

"You like that?" Azirale asked, laughter in their voice.

Matt didn't answer. He wasn't going to admit to enjoying _anything_ that happened while he was _possessed by a demon_. Butâ€¦damn.

Azirale laughed, and Matt's anger flared. But he immediately calmed himself. That's what Stick had taught him - in this type of situation, he couldn't let his emotions get to him. He had to be calm, in control. He couldn't freak out. He couldn't get lost. He couldn't concentrate on the fact that a demon was in his body, his mind. He could panic later - right now he had to be. Calm.

They put some distance between themselves and the police. No fancy flips or gratuitous parkour tonight - just superhuman leaps and brute strength. A few times on the landing, Matt felt the dull repercussions jar his body, and knew if he was more present he would be rolling in pain. Azirale didn't feel it though, and so neither did

Matt. The demon didn't seem to concerned with self-preservation. It also hadn't seemed concerned when a piece of rusty metal was sticking out of its heart earlier. Matt was at least grateful it wasn't actively trying to hurt Matt's body or break any of his bones.

"Where are we going, kid?"

Matt didn't answer. He wasn't going to lead this demon to his home. But he didn't know where else to go. He couldn't stay on the streets forever, and he really wanted to avoid running into any people in this state. He didn't have a lot of options.

They were perched on the corner of an apartment building roof overlooking the city, waiting to see where Matt would lead them next. He had the feeling he better decide fast, or Azirale would be choosing their next locale.

Before he could make a decision, though, he heard the sound of a camera shutter snapping.

Their head jerked towards the noise, and Matt could sense an open window across the street, a heartbeat - young and fast. A kid, leaning out their bedroom window, snapping of picture of Daredevil.

He hoped the kid would go away, but when she saw Daredevil cock his head in her direction, her heart rate picked up and she started waving.

Great.

"Looks like you have a fan," Azirale purred, turning towards the kid against Matt's will. He couldn't do anything to stop them as they stood, leaping across the street and onto the narrow ledge of the kid's window with hardly any effort at all.

The little girl let out a yelp of surprise and stumbled back when Daredevil landed on her window sill, precariously but assuredly balanced on the narrow space.

"Hello, miss. You doing alright tonight?" Azirale said in Matt's voice, in Matt's body.

The little girl crept back towards the window, "Mr. Daredevil?"

Azirale smiled, Matt's lips pulling into a strained grin much wider than his own gentle smile.

"That's me."

The girl giggled slightly, "I can't believe you're here! You're my hero!"

Run away! Run away! Matt wanted to scream. _He's not me! He's not Daredevil!_

"Oh, but I am," Azirale said softly, and Matt realized he had let his guard down. He tried to concentrate, but if he had been in control of

his body his heart would have been racing. Azirale could snap this girl's neck and he wouldn't be able to stop him. All he would be able to do was watch.

"And Daredevil would get the blame, wouldn't he?" Azirale said again.

"Huh? What are you talking about?" the girl asked. She couldn't hear Matt. Of course she couldn't.

"Do you know why they call me the devil, little girl?"

"Uh...because...you punish bad guys?"

"No, because I am a bad, bad man," Azirale hissed, reaching out towards the little girl. To grab her. To snap her neck.

Matt let down all his mental defenses and focused all his energy on his muscles, on regaining control. He felt his heart do a frightening little jump, his limbs burning, his mind racing - then he felt his arms. They were buzzing, like he had slept on them wrong and they had fallen asleep, but they were his.

He forced hands down, gripping the window sill with tight knuckles. He could feel Azirale fighting against him, the muscles in his arms and hands jumping and twitching, but he just tightened his grip.

"Go. Away. NOW," Matt ordered the girl, jaw clenched. He thought he felt a trickle of something warm dribble down his lip - was his nose bleeding?

The girl's heart rate had spiked, pounding out of control. She was frightened. Good.

"Run!" he shouted again, then his mouth clamped shut and he couldn't open it again. Azirale was taking over. The girl turned and ran away from the window. Matt tried to leap away from the window, but Azirale made to follow the girl inside. They ended up halfway in between, slamming into the window sill before losing their grip and falling.

It was a short but swift fall, and Matt's entire body and mind were a swirl of fighting and struggle, trying to regain control from Azirale. They were so busy fighting no one prepared Matt's body for its collision with the ground.

His head smacked against something hard and in the next instant, Matt was unconscious.

3. Chapter 3

Azirale felt the moment Matt's mind went quiet. They also felt the blood sliding out of the nasty gash on the side of his head, just behind his hairline. Oh well.

Matt's mental barrier had shattered when his skull collided with the edge of the dumpster, which was a pro. They now realized Matt had

been taking them in the opposite direction of his home, which was on the other side of town. Who knows where he had actually been headed - Azirale couldn't quite sort that information out. They had access to Matt's head space now, but it was still pretty confusing and difficult to pick through. It seemed as if the dude had spent his entire life fortifying his mind - it was like some sort of alien supercomputer instead of the common brain wiring Azirale was used to dealing with in vessels. And there were still the stupid fucking super senses to deal with.

But after observing Matt for a while, they had a better handle on how to operate it all. Mainly, though, they just concentrated on shutting everything out except what was essential. And no way they were going to go flying across rooftops without Matt to navigate. Not that Azirale could feel pain, but it would be inconvenient if he broke his vessel's legs - made it very hard to walk.

Tonight, Daredevil would just have to take a nice, normal stroll down the sidewalk like a normal human.

Okay, maybe not a nice stroll. Azirale did stick to alleyways, and climbed across a few roofs (no flying leaps) because, after all, Daredevil was a wanted vigilante. And while they could take care of a few police, they really didn't want to deal with that right now. They also didn't want their vessel full of bullet holes.

Eventually they made it to Matt's apartment, clambering in through the roof access. The apartment was nice - not stark, but definitely not excessively decorated. It was neat, clean, sparse. Comfortable. Quiet.

Azirale stripped out of the Daredevil suit and tossed it on the couch. Now that they were in an isolated space, away from the noise and clutter of the city, Matt's sensory radar powers were working much better. Or rather, Azirale had a better handle on it. They could place where everything was in the apartment, what it was - what it smelled like, its temperature, its taste. That didn't stop them from digging through it all, though.

They crouched in the bedroom, pulling all the clothes out of the drawers, running his hands over the soft fabric before tossing it to the floor. They pulled all the books off the shelf - all in braille. Azirale could read them by accessing Matt's knowledge, but they honestly weren't that interested. Most of the books seemed to be boring law books, anyway.

They went to the kitchen and opened all the cabinets, inspecting their contents and tossing them to the counter or the floor - wherever. There were some canned goods, labeled with braille - Foggy had done that. The thought flashed into his head briefly, and Azirale decided to follow it.

Foggy Nelson, Matt's partner-in-law, best friend, keeper of the Daredevil secret. They had gone to college together, interned together, opened a law firm together.

Another name popped into Matt's head when Azirale got to the memories surrounding Nelson & Murdock - Karen Page.

She seemed interesting.

Azirale grinned. He wanted to meet these two.

* * *

><p>Matt dully became aware of his surroundings, one sense at a time. He could feel his legs moving, his footsteps falling on creaking wooden floors, the fabric of a suit rubbing against his skin. Smell cheap coffee somewhere ahead, along with musty wood, ink and paper. Hear the sound of rushing traffic in the distance, voices and heartbeats filtering in from various rooms around him - Foggy and Karen talking in the office.<p>

He briefly wondered why everything seemed so quiet and distant - the world wasn't pounding into him the way it usually was. Then he wondered what he was doing at the office - how had he gotten here? He tried to organize his thoughts, but they were scattered to dark corners of his brain, and he couldn't get a solid grip on his memories. Last night...he had been checking into that warehouse of Bouvois'...there had been the men...and the freakâ€|

The freak.

Matt snapped into awareness, the memories of last night rushing back - Azirale, the demon, the strength - _flying_ - the kid, falling -

And now he was walking into the office. Or rather, Azirale was walking Matt's body into the office. Where Karen and Foggy were debating how to properly toss a baseball.

"_Good morning, sunshine," _Azirale said in Matt's mind.

Matt let out a low growl that of course didn't make it to vocalization.

"_If you lay a finger on either them, I swearâ€|" _Matt replied.

"_Don't worry, this is going to be fun."_

Matt was certain he and Azirale had 100% different opinions on what qualified as fun, but there was nothing he could do to stop Azirale from turning the doorknob and walking inside with a stupid, too-wide grin on his face.

"Oh, hey...Matt," Karen greeted, her voice quickly dipping into confusion.

"Nice fashion statement, buddy," Foggy quipped, hovering somewhere between humour and trepidation. Azirale skirted Matt's hands across his suit, feeling the fabric.

Matt felt a pang of anger and embarrassment. He knew things could be so much worse, being possessed by a demon and all - he should be relieved Azirale was just dressing him ridiculously instead of breaking his bones or killing his loved ones.

But at the same time it just felt so...petty. And humiliating.

Making fun of the blind guy.

Azirale sounded genuinely surprised, though, when they spoke, "Does it not match?"

"Remember that time I tried to get you to dress up as Beetlejuice for Halloween?"

"Noâ€|"

"Yeah."

Karen giggled, but Foggy's voice sounded concerned.

"How did you get that mixed up, dude?"

"Couldn't read the braille tags. I mean, I could, I guess - didn't want to. It takes a lot of time, you know?"

"Uh-huh. You feeling okay?"

"Oh, yeah. I'm great!" Azirale said enthusiastically. Karen and Foggy tilted their heads towards each slightly, and Matt knew they must be giving each other looks. Azirale didn't care, though- they angled his body towards his office and smiled brightly.

"This one is mine, right?"

"What?" Karen asked after a second.

"This office - oh, yeah, I remember now, okay," Azirale said, half to themselves, and walked towards Matt's office. Behind them, Foggy and Karen's hearts picked up.

"Matt! Your head - are you okay?" Karen suddenly asked, taking a step towards him.

Azirale fluttered his hands towards the side of Matt's head, and his fingers brushed against a nasty cut just above his ear. It was starting to scab and congeal, but flecks of wet blood came off on his fingers. Azirale seemed to have cleaned it, barely - so luckily his face wasn't smeared with blood, but that was the bare minimum the demon had done to take care of the cut.

"Oh, yeah - that must look pretty bad. I didn't even realize. Kind of forgot about it."

"How do you forget about something like that! Matt, you need to go to the hospital!"

"I'm sure it looks worse than it is.. If only these fucking eyes could actually see, this would be a lot easier!" Azirale laughed, harsh and angry.

"Alright, that's enough, let's sit you down," Foggy suddenly rushed forward, grabbing Matt's shoulders and steering him into his office and plopping him down in his chair. Karen's racing heart wasn't muffled at all when Foggy shut the door behind them.

"What the hell, Matt," Foggy hissed. Azirale wasn't paying attention, though. They were prodding the cut on Matt's head with his fingers, rubbing the pads together and smearing blood everywhere.

"Stop poking at it!" Foggy snapped, swatting Matt's hands.

For a second, Azirale froze, eyebrows raised. Matt felt panic surge through him - it was strange to feel emotions without the corresponding physical indicators. There was no chill, no clenched muscles, short breaths, racing heart beat - just the pure emotion of panic. He knew Azirale was about to do something horrible to Foggy for swatting him.

Matt struggled to regain control, once again letting down his mental barriers to focus on reclaiming his body. He wasn't having much success.

"I'm calling Claire."

Matt was so focused on fighting Azirale, that by the time he felt he demon dipping into his memories of Claire all he could do was splutter in protest. In the next instant, Azirale was spreading that unnerving grin across Matt's face.

"Oh, yes. Do call Claire."

Foggy aimed his face towards Matt - probably making a face - and pulled out his phone.

"Yeah - exactly how hard did you hit your head last night?"

"Pretty hard, I suppose. It knocked Matt out."

"Speaking in third person, okay. That can't be good."

"Oh, sorry. I mean - it knocked me out."

That's when all Matt's hard work paid off. While Azirale was gloating and making a fool of Matt, he had been concentrating all his willpower. Azirale might be a powerful demon - but this was Matt's body. His mind.

Azirale had his elbows on the desk, resting his head in his hands and smiling towards Foggy - but when they felt Matt taking back control, they fought back. His face twisted up and his arms started shaking, gripping the edge of the desk, as Matt forced his way back into his muscles, back into the forefront of his brain - pushing a cursing, fighting Azirale back.

"Whoa, whoa! Matt! Matt - what's going on? Can you hear me?"

Matt gritted his teeth and pushed harder. He knew it probably looked like he was having some sort of episode or seizure to Foggy. Which wouldn't really be helpful for what he had to say next.

"No! .don't call Claire. Foggy."

His words came out rushed and broken. Yeah, definitely not helping his case.

"I'm calling her."

"Foggy...no, it's not...me."

Of course that didn't make sense to Foggy. How was Matt supposed to explain everything that happened last night, about how a centuries-old demon had possessed him, when he could hardly get five words out?

But he couldn't call Claire. He couldn't let Azirale have her, too. Foggy and Karen were already in enough danger.

Matt heard Foggy tapping on his phone, little beeps emitting from the screen. Dialing.

"No!" Matt shouted, and suddenly Foggy's phone flew out of his hand and crashed into the wall. It clattered to the floor, several pieces popping off and scattering.

For a moment, they both sat there in silence.

Foggy stared at the phone, then turned his head towards Matt.

"Did...did you justâ€¦?"

"No. I didn't...wasn'tâ€¦!"

"Do you have freaking _telekinesis_, Matt? _What the fuck_," Foggy was in Matt's face, voice trembling - trying desperately not to shout.

Strangely, as soon as the phone had shot out of Foggy's hand, Azirale had quieted down. Matt could actually relax slightly, instead of constantly having to push back just for minimum control. He could sense the demon was...interested? Fascinated? They seemed to just be observing instead of trying to control Matt. Which he was grateful for, but also trepidatious of.

Did you do that? Matt asked.

_That was all you - kid. You used my powers all on your own. _

Matt gulped. He couldn't think about that right now. Foggy was still leaning over him, heart beating like a locomotive.

"I have to go," Matt said. Azirale was still there - and Matt just wanted to get them as far away from Foggy and Karen as he could.

"Matt, what the hell - you can't just -" Matt shoved past Foggy and headed out the door, trailing his fingers along the wall as he walked. Now that he was in control, or sharing control - he didn't really understand completely what was going on with Azirale - but he was in command of his body and his senses. He could navigate fine on his own, but having physical contact to guide him was always reassuring. Especially now.

"Matt, what -" Karen started, but Matt didn't even pause. He needed to _leave_.

He remembered to snatch his cane at the last moment, then accidentally slammed the door behind him. Foggy and Karen's footsteps ran to the door, and Foggy opened it to shout at him,

But suddenly Matt was in his apartment.

The abrupt change of scene took him by surprise. He doubled over, feeling nauseous and dizzy. One minute - creaky floors, musty wood, stale coffee, Foggy, Karen. The next - concrete, quiet, the familiar scent of his own blankets and blood.

After a second, he calmed down and stumbled to his couch.

"What was that?" he rasped aloud.

_Teleportation. _

"Why...why did you bring me back here?"

I didn't. That was you.

"How could I do that? I didn't even know...I don't know!"

Matt could feel his heart speeding up as he started to panic. And strangely enough, that's what calmed him down. He could feel his body again. The physical sensations were back. He was here, he was present.

Azirale was still there - Matt could feel them, sitting inside his chest like a shard of ice. Somehow, he innately knew he wouldn't be able to push him out on his own, even though he was more in control now than he had been when he almost expunged the demon earlier. No, now Azirale had settled in. It was like a splinter that had dug its way in deep, and the skin had already healed over.

But Matt wasn't about to let Azirale get back in the driver's seat.

Right now, his control felt fragile and tentative. If he got too emotional, or panicked, he was sure Azirale would shove Matt back down into the darkness and the fog and take control again.

So he did the only thing he knew to do.

He meditated.

Cross-legged, back straight, the floor cool against his skin.

It was a little different than his usual routine, because he had a specific goal in mind - to fortify his mind against the demon, and bind Azirale down if he could.

So far, he wasn't having much luck.

Azirale didn't take over again, which was good. But he didn't seem quelled by Matt's mental defenses. They did complain when Matt walled his mind off, sealing away his thoughts and emotions and memories. They complained when Matt sat there for two more hours, in silence, unmoving. They complained when Matt wouldn't talk back to them.

They complained a lot.

"_I thought you were supposed to be a powerful, centuries-old demon. Isn't all this whining beneath you?" _Matt finally gave in. He knew it was amateur, but three hours of listening to a voice in his head griping was enough.

_I am a powerful, centuries-old demon. And no, this isn't beneath me.

_

You could always leave, if you're so bored.

I still have to teach you a lesson.

Matt sighed. _Is whining part of the lesson?_

_No. But you're turning out to be more interesting than I thought. I might have to modify my plans. _

Matt stopped talking, blocking off his mind again. He didn't want to know what Azirale's long term plans were. Well, he did, but he couldn't deal with that right now.

Right now, he needed to focus.

They sat there for several more hours.

Matt knew he should be hungry by now, but he didn't feel anything. He guessed it had something to do with being possessed. He wasn't thirsty, didn't feel pain. Wasn't tired.

He knew Foggy had probably tried to call him, but he turned his phone off. He was half-expecting Foggy to walk up the stairs and start pounding on his door any minute now, but that didn't happen.

Instead, Matt heard something else.

Azirale heard it, too.

A woman, screaming for help. Three blocks over.

There were other voices - three men, surrounding her. Threatening her.

Well, let's get a move on, then.

Matt startled at Azirale's voice. He realized the demon had been quiet for the past hour.

"What?"

Let's go - that woman is crying for help. Isn't that your cue?

"I can't go. Not now. Not with you."

"Oh, so you're just going to let those men have their way with her? That's not very heroic."

The voice came out of Matt's mouth, but it was Azirale speaking. To anyone else, it would look like Matt was having a conversation with himself.

"You being there will only make things worse," Matt answered.

"I promise I won't kill the lady. Isn't that good enough?"

"No."

"You can't stay here forever."

"I don't plan on it."

"Then let's go! Come on - let's go be Daredevil, save the day! Or are you just going to sit here and listen to them rape and murder her?"

Matt growled, and in his head, Azirale laughed.

"You can't kill anyone."

"I won't kill the woman," Azirale answered.

"_Anyone_."

"Fine, whatever - let's go!"

Matt begrudgingly stood, but his body hopped up with more energy than he had been expecting. Azirale was back. They weren't exactly in control - they were sharing, with Matt. It was a strange feeling - similar to before, when they had fled the alley and made that initial flying leap. Their minds were in sync, moving together as one, yet still separate. Matt wasn't going to think too hard about how that worked.

Instead, he concentrated on gearing up. The woman had stopped screaming and was sobbing now. One of the men had struck her across the face.

Azirale was right - there was no way Matt was just going to sit there and listen to that happening. Not when he could stop it.

Not when _they_ could stop it.

He was worried about exactly what Azirale might do when they go there - but at the same time, if anyone was going to be punished at the hands of the devil, those men had it coming.

Azirale and Matt moved as one to the window, perching there a moment, listening - then leaped.

4. Chapter 4

_Hello, everyone! Thanks so much for reading this far! I'm having a lot of fun writing this, and I hope you're having fun reading it. I love getting reviews - so thanks to those who left reviews, and thanks **so** much to everyone who has followed/faved. You're the

best! __ Without further ado - __

* * *

><p>They didn't just leap.<p>

They _flew._

Again, Matt refused to enjoy _any aspect _of being _possessed by a demon._

But deep down, a part of him enjoyed the feeling of soaring through the air, unhindered by the world below, only the cool air against his skin.

And Matt could tell Azirale was enjoying it, too. Anytime Matt flipped or twisted in the air, or pulled off a particularly tricky move as they vaulted wall to roof to pole to fire escape to roof, Azirale would laugh or let out a little cheer. Sometimes these little celebratory noises were only audible in Matt's head, but other times Azirale would actually let out a whoop as they sailed across an alleyway.

"This whole vigilante thing really only works if I keep a low profile, you know," Matt verbally interrupted, cutting off a peal of enthusiastic laughter from Azirale.

"_And there you go again, interrupting me! I've never had a vessel that could do that before," _Azirale answered, mentally.

Matt felt a tingle of unease ripple across his ribs, a familiar feeling. Having been blind most of his life, he was used to people studying him, being fascinated by his disability - and it never made him any less uncomfortable. He had always been afraid if the wrong person discovered his senses, they would want to study that, too. Some curiosity to break down and analyze. And Azirale was looking at him the same way.

Or, not exactly looking, since Matt's eyes couldn't exactly _look_ - and there wasn't really anything to look at, anyway, because they were both in the same body. But he could feel the demon's interest focusing in on him, latching on, hungry.

Plus, he had the feeling that the more interesting Azirale found Matt, the less likely he would leave.

Matt didn't know what to do about it, though, so he just stopped talking to the demon and instead focused on getting to the woman. She was only a street away now - they had reached her in just a couple of minutes. As in - two minutes. Maybe shorter.

Again - Matt didn't enjoy the fact that he was now about three times faster than normal. But he was grateful that they had gotten there that quickly - because the men had roughed the woman up quite a bit, and two of them were holding her down on the ground while the third got his belt undone. Matt could smell their sweat, their filth, the woman's blood on their knuckles. He could hear her ragged sobs and stuttering heart.

Then he heard the man whose pants were now falling around his ankles'

heart jump when he saw Daredevil drop out of the air and land in the alley just a few yard away.

"What, Harry? Come on - or I'll have a go," one of the men on the ground said, turning his head towards the pantsless man, Harry. The other man turned his head towards Daredevil, and his heart jumped too.

Harry and Man #2 both stumbled backward. The third man didn't move except to slump to the ground when Daredevil's billy club connected with his skull.

Matt moved towards the woman, wanting to tell her to go and find help - but instead his body carried him past the woman and towards the unconscious man.

_Let's finish him off. _

Azirale lifted their foot to stomp down on the man's head, snapping his neck or crushing his skull or both - but Matt quickly redirected the blow, causing them to stumble.

No killing, Matt reminded Azirale.

They stayed like that for a moment, frozen, half hunched over while Matt and Azirale fought over whether to kill the man. The woman stared at them in fear for a moment, then scrambled away and ran for the mouth of the alley.

BANG!

BANG! BANG!

Three gunshots rocketed through the alley, making Azirale and Matt wince, dropping closer to the ground as they focused their energy outwards once again.

Harry had pulled a gun out of - Matt wasn't entirely sure where, since he was holding his pants up with his other hand. Neither of them had noticed the gun before; or if Azirale had, they hadn't thought to share the information with Matt.

One of the bullets had smashed into the concrete near Daredevil. Bad aim.

The other had landed in the brick wall of the neighboring building. Even worse aim.

The third had flown into the back of the fleeing woman, between her ribs and her right hip.

Something dark and furious surged up in Matt, seeping out from between his gritted teeth in the form of a low growl as he turned to face the two men.

* * *

><p>Azirale felt the shift, the change, the transformation in Matt.<p>

And sure, they had experienced human anger before. Dealt with it quite a lot, actually. But never like this.

As soon as Matt realized the woman had been shot, that careful control he had been maintaining ever since Azirale moved in just disintegrated. Fell apart in shards of rage. All those hours of meditation flew out the window as Matt moved towards the two men. And that was another strange thing.

Matt had taken back control of his body, but he hadn't fought Azirale for control, or struggled to push them back - it was as if he had matched some sort of wavelength with Azirale. They felt their vessel moving, felt like a puppet on a string - it was almost as if Matt were the one possessing them. Which didn't make any kind of sense, since Azirale didn't even have a physical body. It was more like Matt had stepped into their soul and was using it how he saw fit.

And Azirale - well, he wasn't helpless, exactly. It was a strange feeling. They didn't want to fight Matt, didn't want to push back, or regain control. They were with Matt. Like Matt's emotions had infected them, taken over their own feelings. It had been a long, long while since Azirale had felt human emotions - he had forgotten what vividness and intensity humans conjured in their souls.

They could feel the anger, and the fury, and the terror. The heat that buzzed in their ears, the cold stream that twisted in their gut, the short circuit in their brain that cut off reasoning, the live wire that just spoke to violence and desire. Azirale felt it all, he felt what Matt was feeling - not just as an observer, but as a participant.

And they wanted to kill that man.

Harry aimed the gun at them again, and Matt and Azirale - they weren't really separate in the moment - flicked a hand towards the man, sending the gun flying.

The second man made to move towards Daredevil, but they had already found the second billy club and flung it towards the assailant with pinpoint accuracy. And demon strength. It shot from Daredevil's fingers and crashed into the man's eye socket, cracking bone as it drove through the skull and bluntly dug into the brain.

He fell, dead.

Harry backed up, tripped on his pants, and fell on his ass.

In the next instant, they were on him.

Grabbing his collar.

Lifting him into the air.

Listened to him beg for mercy, listened to him sob, then choke.

Listened to his throat start to crumple, to tear.

Smelled the blood in his mouth, spilling past his lips, drowning in it.

They hadn't used this trick on anyone in a while - and usually cut it short when they started coughing up their own blood. But this time they didn't stop. Daredevil didn't stop.

And they were Daredevil this time.

They weren't doing this to pass time, or bully some humans, or take out their own cold, dead anger that had festered over the centuries. They were doing this to satisfy the black rage that was consuming them.

Finally, they dropped the man to the ground. He was still breathing, but he wouldn't be for long.

They turned back towards the woman. She was trembling on the ground, bleeding, afraid.

Daredevil walked closer.

Her heart beat faster.

She was afraid of them.

They didn't care - they crouched down next to her, shucking their glove, placing their bare fingers on the bullet wound. It had passed clean through.

They cocked their head and listened - no sirens. No one nearby, no one on the phone. There had been no witnesses. No one to call the police.

They gathered the woman in their arms and then suddenly they were standing in a hospital, full of loud voices and weak heartbeats and blood and antiseptic and buzzing machines.

There were shouts and spiked heart rates to greet them when they suddenly appeared, but when they laid the injured woman on a nearby gurney, the attention shifted to the new patient.

And then they were back in Matt's apartment.

And they came apart.

Azirale felt Matt peel away from them like a snake shedding its skin. They were two spokes on a cassette tape, spinning in perfect unison - then suddenly they stalled, and the tape unwound and jammed, spilling film out of its base like intestines from a gutted pig. It was jolting. Like running, all grace and speed - then one of your legs seizes up while the other tries to take a flying leap. Then smacking face-first into the tarmac.

Matt shuddered and fell to his knees with a groan. Azirale fell with him, letting their legs fold under them, feeling numb. Matt's emotions were leaking out of the demon, going back where they belonged, leaving Azirale feeling colder and emptier than they had in a long time. Even Matt's senses snapping out of control for a second wasn't enough to phase them, the sudden influx of smells and sound and texture seemingly far and distant.

Azirale could sense Matt's rising panic and distress, but they couldn't _feel_ it anymore.

And they wanted to.

The realization surprised them. They had possessed Matt to show him what it really meant to be a demon, but instead they had been reminded what it had been like to be human. They were disappointed in themselves. A little disgusted. But they only let it bother them for a moment - they were a demon, and demons didn't care how unseemly or inappropriate an idea was; they cared about self gratification. And Azirale wanted that feeling back.

The feeling of feeling.

They probed a little into Matt's mind, trying to see if they could soak up anything, but Matt reacted sharply, violently shoving them out, lashing out in fear and anger.

It was a little annoying. But Azirale was feeling more than a little drained and dazed at the moment, so he let it slide.

"Why are you freaking out? We saved that woman," Azirale asked.

"I killed those men. I _killed them."_

Azirale vaguely remembered Matt saying something about not killing anyone at the beginning of their little adventure, but had disregarded it. What did it matter if they killed a few rapists? They were bad guys. And Matt was a wanted criminal, anyway.

"It _does _matter," Matt hissed, and Azirale realized he hadn't been shielding his thoughts, at all. Oh well.

"You obviously wanted to kill him, so you did."

"I did not want to kill them! That was you! That was you!" Matt shouted, grabbing one of the cans Azirale had pulled out of the cabinet earlier and throwing it against the wall. His voice quickly faded into a trembling whimper.

"Does the lie detector thing work on yourself? Because you're definitely lying."

"You're a demon - can't you tell that kind of thing?" Matt snapped, sinking to the floor and putting his hands over his head. Azirale shrugged, which would have looked awkward if anyone had been there to see Matt's body. But it was just the two of them.

"Depends."

"I can't believe I killed them...I don't...I usually can control!"

"I mean, I'm not saying I didn't have a hand in it - but it definitely wasn't just me. It was...us."

Matt didn't respond, and Azirale prodded his emotions again. Matt didn't defend this time. Azirale thought he might be in shock. There were a million different emotions and thoughts running through his

head, all contradicting one another. Anger at himself. Anger at the men. Anger at Azirale. Sorrow. Guilt. Fear. Pleasure. Justice. Satisfaction. Horror. Peace. And the memories of the murders kept playing themselves over and over again. The smell of the man's blood, the sound of his choking breath, the feel of his clothes wrapped up in Matt's fingers. The sound of the other man's skull crunching against Matt's baton.

Matt's heart spiked for a second, and his hand flew to his leg holster where he kept his clubs. They were there. Azirale didn't remember picking them up, and neither did Matt. They must have done it in that rage-trance state. Or maybe Matt had subconsciously used some of Azirale's demonic power to teleport the clubs back to him or something. They weren't really sure how a human accessing the power of the demon possessing it worked.

They also weren't sure how Matt's mind was working. Because even if they had forgotten the clubs, it's not like there were two still-living witnesses who could confirm Daredevil being at the scene of the crime.

Matt, once again, heard Azirale's thoughts, and slumped further to the ground until he was laying curled up on his side, pressing his forehead into the cold floor. Azirale let him. He wasn't concerned with controlling Matt's body at present.

"What was that? Back there. I choked that man without touching him."

"We choked him. That was both of us. And honestly, I don't know. You're a fucking weirdo - I've never possessed a vessel that could use my demonic powers like that. Or...or whatever else you did back there. I know you felt that, too."

"I let the devil out," Matt said, laughing without a single hint of sincerity.

Memories started flashing through Matt's head, and Azirale tried to follow them - a boxer, the smell of sweat, the sound of a staticky tv set, a priest - a priest?

But suddenly Matt was closing up his mind again, scooping all his renegade memories and pulling them back behind the safety of his mental wall. Azirale didn't fight him, but they were a bit miffed.

Instead, they both just lay there on the floor, unmoving. Each sorting through what had just happened.

Matt feeling closer to being a real devil than he ever had before, and Azirale feeling closer to human. Neither of them were particularly happy about it.

But deep down they both wanted more.

Suddenly someone was pounding on the door.

They both started, but jerked in different directions that ended up with Matt's body spasming on the floor for a second before finally sitting up and facing the door.

"Matt, open up! Matt!"

Foggy.

Azirale lurched towards the door, but Matt pulled away - once again, they ended up falling to the floor with a loud thud.

Whatever synchronosity they had experienced before had been reversed now, apparently. But it didn't matter, because Foggy had a key and was loudly jangling it in the lock, trying to get the door open. His heart was fast. He was sweating. His hands shook slightly.

"Leave him alone," Matt growled.

"Why would I hurt Foggy? He's our best friend," Azirale said, sounding sickly sweet and innocent.

"Matt?" Foggy had heard them talking. Of course, to him, it would just sound like Matt was talking to himself.

Matt wanted to jump out the window, to avoid Foggy at all costs. Azirale didn't want to completely take over their body again, but they wanted to stay and talk to Foggy. So they grabbed the counter and clamped their fingers down in an iron grip - it helped to have a physical anchor to focus on, rather than just fight a mental battle with Matt for control. When had they needed to fight a vessel for control? The whole idea was ludicrous - but Azirale didn't want to shove Matt away, and honestly, he wasn't sure he could at this point.

Foggy walked into the room.

"Whoa!" his head slowly turned, surveying the scene. Ah, right. Azirale had made quite a mess the night before. Clothes were still scattered across the floor, along with Matt's bedding, books, and personal possessions. Plates, tupperware containers, cans and bottles lay stacked on the counters, tossed haphazardly in the sink, or broken on the floor.

"Foggy, you need to leave," Matt said from his place by the counter, where Azirale had placed them.

Foggy turned his head towards Matt, and his heart rate picked up. They noticed Foggy was holding something in his hand - a newspaper? Azirale pulled Matt's lips up in a grin - they were getting much better with the super senses.

Foggy took a tiny half-step back when Matt smiled, then squared his shoulders and walked a few steps closer.

"Matt - what the hell happened last night?"

They frowned, cocked their head - last night, when Azirale possessed Matt?

"Did you kill those guys?"

But that had just happened - how did Foggy know -

"How do you know about that?" Matt asked, and Foggy's heartbeat started drumming even faster.

"How do I - it's all over the news! Matt - what in fucking hell? One had a giant gaping hole in his face! And I don't even know what you did to the other one, the cops can't even figure it out!"

They were still frowning.

"Wait, what day is it?"

"Wha - it's May 8th, Matt."

The next day. They had laid on the floor all night? And part of the next day? It had only felt like a few minutes...or hours...honestly, time had seemed nonexistent last night. Azirale blamed his skewed sense of time on immortality and the whole way being in hell warped time.

So the story of their heroics had already been printed. Azirale was still amazed at how quickly humans spread gossip.

"Foggy, I can explain," Matt was saying. He didn't sound very convincing.

"Just let me tell him. I'll do a better job," Azirale said.

Matt immediately tensed, and Foggy - yep, his heart started beating even faster. He was going to have a god damned heart attack any second at this rate.

"_Shut up,"_ Matt said internally.

"You shut up. I got this," Azirale answered.

"Azirale!" Matt barked - then cut himself off.

"So formal - just call me Az," Azirale laughed.

"...Matt?" Foggy asked, voice wavering.

"Yeah, you already know him. Let me introduce myself. Name's Azirale - but I kind of like the sound of just Az, don't you?"

Azirale turned towards Foggy - with very little resistance from Matt, surprisingly - and pasted on an enthusiastic smile. They were still wearing the Daredevil costume, but had ditched the mask and gloves at some point. So when they turned towards Foggy and flashed their eyes black, the trick had its full effect.

Foggy's heart almost stopped.

5. Chapter 5

Foggy had been having a bad day.

First, he overslept his alarm and had to rush to the office without any breakfast. The most important meal of the day. Then when he got

there, no one was even there, so all his rushing had been for naught. Soon enough, though, Karen had arrived which made things a little better. That was one of the pros of working with your best friends.

The con of working with your best friends was watching one of them walk into the office with a giant gash in the side of his face and apparent short-term memory loss. And then having to lie to Karen about all of it.

Sure, it had been a little funny at first to see Matt walk in wearing the black and white striped jacket Foggy had bought him a few years back for a Beetlejuice costume - which Matt had refused to wear. Said costumes weren't his thing.

Yeah, right.

But that little bit of funny had evaporated real quick when he started muttering and cursing to himself, asking where his office was, and - oh yeah, bleeding from a fucking head wound.

And things had gotten even worse. Of course, he expected Matt to argue with him about calling Claire. Water was wet. Matt had zero sense of self-preservation. What else was new?

He had been extremely concerned when Matt started seizing up, or having some sort of attack - but not necessarily surprised. Kind of came with the territory of I think I can see your skull through that gash in your head. _

But then things had gotten weird. Like, aliens falling from the sky weird. Discovering your best friend had super senses and was a famous vigilante weird.

Matt threw his phone against the wall - with his mind. Or Foggy assumed that's what happened. One minute he was dialing Claire's number, Matt was telling him not to - and then an invisible force pulled the phone from his grip and smashed it against the wall. And Matt's eyes went big, his face scared and guilty. And when Foggy asked if he had telekinesis - was he seriously still hiding things from Foggy? - he just ran away.

Or maybe a more apt term would be fucking vanish into thin air.

_

He and Karen ran to the door just in time to see Matt disappear. He didn't duck into a doorway or jump out of sight - one minute he was there, the next he wasn't.

The air smelled sour, and a chill washed over Foggy - but he didn't have much time to think about what that meant, because Karen was looking back at him with huge eyes.

And Foggy knew he was going to have to cover for Matt.

That asshole. _

"Foggy - whatâ€¦"

"I don't know."

"But...he just...did he justâ€¦vanish?"

"That's impossible."

"But he was standing right there -"

"We probably just missed him."

Karen looked at him skeptically, and Foggy's heart clenched up. He hated lying. Especially to Karen. And he was also bad at it. Very, very bad. Why was he even covering for Matt? The dude had lied to him again. About something kind of huge. _

But at the same time something didn't sit right with Foggy about all this. Matt hadn't been himself. Not just the head-injury induced ramblings and weird superpowers - or yeah, that, plus something. It was enough to keep Foggy from writing Matt of completely. He was his best friend, after all.

That's right - Matt was his best friend. That was still true, even after Daredevil. And when Foggy had accepted that, he had just accepted whatever weird shit would come with that. Matt had told him some of the strange things he had encountered while Daredevil-ing - and Foggy had seen aliens and gods battling in the middle of the city. Plus there was that recent story about the mind-controller, Kilgrave, who could control people like puppets, even hours afterward. He had even made people kill themselves, according to the article Foggy had read.

"What did he say when you were talking to him?"

"He didn't want to see the doctor," Foggy answered. That was true, at least.

"I'm going to call him," Karen said, her eyes sliding away from Foggy, hurt.

He couldn't blame her.

"Yeah, that's a good idea," Foggy said. He knew Matt wouldn't answer. Or if he did, Karen wouldn't get anything out of him. He hated Matt a little for that.

He went back into his office while Karen got her phone out. After shutting his door, he retrieved his own phone from the floor and put it back together. The back had popped off, and the battery, and the screen had cracked. Parts of the case had shattered across the floor. But it was still intact, and after a little finagling - operating.

Foggy called Claire.

The phone rang long enough that Foggy was going to hang up and try again later, but before he got a chance to, she answered.

"Foggy? What happened this time." Her voice was flat. Tired. Accepting.

"Head wound, but -"

"Is he okay? I'm kind of busy at the moment."

"I...I don't know. He's acting weird. Forgot where his office was for a moment, saying weird shit. And...well, how busy are you?"

"Pretty. Talk about weird shit - we got plenty of that here."

"Like what?"

Foggy was vaguely aware they were shifting into a conversational tone, like old buddies - he shouldn't be old buddies status with Matt's emergency medical caregiver. That just spoke to the amount of times Matt needed emergency medical care, and Foggy and Claire always seemed to converge at these moments. But he thought they both needed it. To be able to talk about the insanity Matt had added to their lives with someone else who understood.

"Seven patients came in the other day - foaming at the mouth crazy, bleeding from the nose and eyes. So pumped full of adrenaline that they all went into cardiac arrest."

"Wow."

"Two of them died before we could do anything, and another woke up - started shouting and pulling against his restraints - and then died shortly after. It was freaky as shit."

"What about the rest?"

"Three are still in comas. The fourth woke up, but doesn't remember anything. Still can't figure out what's causing all this."

There was a sigh on her end of the line, and then she spoke again, "So tell me about your weird shit."

"Well...you know about Matt's super senses thing."

"Yeah. Kinda hard to forget that one."

"Has he ever told you about...anything else?"

"Like how he learned to fight? Briefly. And vaguely."

"No. Like...other powers? Abilities?"

"Aren't the ninja moves and hearing heartbeats two blocks over enough?"

"Apparently not. I think he used telekinesis earlier."

There was a pause, then, "Telekinesis?"

"Yeah, you know - moving stuff with your mind."

"I know what telekinesis is. Matt moved something with his mind?"

"He threw my phone against the wall."

"I...I honestly had no clue about that, Foggy. He's never mentioned it, and I've never seen him use it. Not even when he's out of it - and I've seen him pretty out of it."

"But you don't think I'm crazy to think that?"

"I've seen too much crazy to dismiss anything these days."

"What about teleportation."

"Matt teleported?"

"I think? Maybe?"

"I'm sorry, Foggy - that's beyond my expertise."

Foggy sighed, ran a hand down his face, "I know. I'm sorry."

"You said he hit his head - think it's related?"

"I don't know. I'll talk to him."

"I'll try to make some time later, but - wait. Sorry, I have to go. One of the patients woke up."

"Good luck," Foggy said, but she had already gone.

He sighed again, and laid his head on the desk. What the fuck.

What the fuck was his life?

After that things just kept happening. Karen tried to show him an article about people discovering latent superpowers - he freaked out a little bit, tried to cover it up poorly. Then a client came in - an actual paying client. And he couldn't turn them away, because they needed help, and someone had to make some money around here and it definitely wasn't going to be Murdock.

Finally they closed up for the evening. After avoiding a watchful and concerned Karen, he debated over whether or not to go see Matt. His feet were already taking him there before he decided.

But Matt didn't answer the door, of course. Foggy had a key, but he didn't use it. He didn't even know if Matt was home - it would be getting dark soon, maybe he had gotten an early start. Or whatever it was superpowered vigilantes did in their free time.

So he went home and looked up the article Karen had shown him about latent superpowers, and fell asleep at his computer after reading through pages and pages of scientific technobabble and theories about how superpowers worked. He was on a trendy local news website that was discussing the multiple heroes residing in New York and their various abilities - there was some debate over whether the local hero of Hell's Kitchen actually had powers or not. Some people thought he had enhanced strength, or reflexes, or maybe healing - or some other more subtle, invisible power, while others thought he was just a good fighter.

Foggy halfway wished he could log on and leave an anonymous comment:

Hey, I'm Daredevil's best friend, and I happen to know for a fact he has superpowers! Enhanced senses - hearing, smell, touch, taste - but not sight, cuz get this, he's BLIND. But everything else - way beyond normal. He can hear heartbeats across a room, tell if you're lying. Smell a gun in your pants three blocks down. Can taste fear and feel the air current changing from a fart in the next room. Oh and also he might be telekinetic? And possibly able to teleport. You people probably know better than I do, and I've known the guy for years!

Instead, he looked at some of the videos people had managed to capture of Matt running around on rooftops or beating the shit out of criminals - and he realized Matt never used telekinesis or teleported or anything wacky like that in any of his fights. Foggy wasn't sure what that meant - maybe this was a recent development.

He was still thinking about it when his head drooped forward, his heavy eyelids fell shut and he passed out still sitting at his computer.

When he woke up the next morning - thank god he had a permanent alarm set on his phone - his computer was still open to the news website. He was about to close his laptop when something in the sidebar caught his eye. It was another article about Daredevil, published just now.

So, apparently, while Foggy had been deliberating over how to talk to Matt and reading stupid articles all night, Matt had gone on a rampage and killed two people in the night.

And now was being suspected for an additional group of mysterious deaths the night before.

And then he was all fear and anger and trembling and sorrow and being torn apart as his feet took him to Matt's, so many emotions rioting that he didn't even know what he was going to say when he started knocking on Matt's door.

There wasn't an answer for a moment, so he knocked again.

He heard a thud, like someone falling.

Then the sound of Matt's voice, too quiet for Foggy to make out what he was saying.

He didn't have time for this. He took his key out and shakily put it in the lock.

When he stepped into the apartment, the first thing he noticed was the mess. Everything was out of place. Furniture shoved askew, clothes and books and bedding strewn across the floor, cabinets open, food and dishes piled on counters or spread on the kitchen floor - some dishes broken, or food spilling out on the tile - there was a dent in the wall from something being thrown or punched in.

Matt was standing by the counter, holding onto it for dear life.

"Foggy, you need to leave," his voice was strained, tight. The cut on

his head was still there - it hadn't been stitched or bandaged, or even cleaned up at all. He looked tired, stressed, pale.

Then suddenly he smiled. Not his normal, soft Matt Murdock grin - it was a wide smile, stretching unfamiliarly across his face.

Foggy took a step back, then summoned his courage and asked what he came here to ask.

"Matt, what the hell happened last night?"

Matt cocked his head, eyebrows scrunched together in confusion. Great - did he not remember last night? What was going on in that head? Foggy's eyes glanced across the mess again - had Matt lost it, for real?

"Did you kill those guys?" the question grated against his throat, the words scraping his lips as he said them. But he had to say them.

Matt answered too quick, "How do you know about that?"

Yes. That was a yes. A confession. Admission of guilt. Foggy wanted to throw up.

"How do I - it's all over the news! Matt - what in fucking hell? One had a giant gaping hole in his face! And I don't even know what you did to the other one, the cops can't even figure it out!"

Then Matt asked what day it was, frowning in confusion, and Foggy knew he was fucked. Matt was fucked. This was all fucked. Matt was saying something, trying to explain to Foggy, but Foggy knew Matt couldn't explain. Something had happened to Matt, something Foggy couldn't fix. Something had snapped. Foggy really was going to throw up.

He knew Matt would never kill someone. He knew that. He knew that, right? So what had happened? What had changed? Could getting hit in the head do that to you? His eyes crept over the mess in the apartment again. Something was obviously happening to Matt.

Before he could think about it anymore, though, things got even more fucked.

"Just let me tell him. I'll do a better job," Matt said suddenly, but something was different. His voice was different.

Matt's face twisted up for a moment, and then after a second he spoke again.

"You shut up. I got this. Azirale! So formal - just call me Az."

Matt was talking to...himself? Foggy's eyes danced around the apartment - they were alone. Could Matt hear someone else that Foggy couldn't? What was going on?

"Matt?" he asked, voice cracking.

Matt's head tilted towards him, and his entire body relaxed. He let

go of the counter and rolled his shoulders, "Yeah, you already know him. Let me introduce myself. Name's Azirale - but I kind of like the sound of just Az, don't you?"

And then Matt smiled that creepy, unnatural smile again - and his eyes went black.

Completely black. Like a shark's. Or something. Something evil.

Foggy stumbled back, and Matt laughed. He cackled. Threw his head back, stiffly, like a puppet, and howled with laughter.

And that's when Foggy knew it wasn't Matt. He knew this wasn't Matt right now. He had no clue what the fuck was going on, but this wasn't Matt. It was...someone else. Matt could get clocked by sledgehammer and get the powers of all the Avengers combined and he would still be Matt.

Not whatever this was.

Anger welled up inside Foggy, pushing the fear and confusion back, overwhelming it with concern. He clenched his fists and took a planted his shaky legs on the floor.

"Who are you?" he shouted.

Matt - not Matt - looked at him with those black, black eyes, still smiling that smile.

"I just told you - I'm Az."

"What did you do to Matt?"

"Oh, he's still here. Somewhere in here - I think he just kind of checked out a moment ago. Not sure what he's up to right now. I'm more interested in you!" Not-Matt - Az, whoever that was - pointed a finger at Foggy's chest.

"Leave Matt alone."

"No, that's not happening. He's far too much fun. Are you going to entertain me too, or just be a bore? So far it seems you're just going to be a bore."

"Who are you?"

"I told you - I'm Azirale."

"Yeah, I heard you. But what are you?"

"Oh! I'm a demon. Heard about your friend here calling himself the Devil and decided to check it out myself. Things didn't go according to plan, but they're turning out to be far more gratifying than I thought, so it's a win-win."

"I don't see how this is a win for Matt. Are you controlling his body?"

"Sometimes. Sometimes he takes control back. It's a give-take

relationship."

Foggy thought back to Matt seizing up in his office, trying to tell Foggy something, then leaving in a rush - that had been Matt. And just a few moments ago - he told Foggy to leave. So Matt was still in there somewhere. With this _thing_.

This thing that was strolling to the couch and slumping onto the cushions like it owned the place.

"Sorry about the mess - I wasn't thinking about company when I went through Matt's things. He has a wall in here," Az tapped Matt's forehead, "His mind is locked up tighter than a nun's cootch. Can't get much information out of there, so I tried going through his things, but braille is such a chore to read. Especially when he won't help at all. But maybe you can just tell me about him. He's got a lot of strange memories - they're hard to sort out. And is he, by any chance, Catholic? That would just be deliciously ironic."

Foggy was rooted to his spot, staring at Matt - Az - his best friend, sitting on the couch, prattling on in someone else's voice. Because it wasn't Matt's voice, no matter how close it sounded.

Whoever was in Matt's body seemed to be very full of themselves. They kept talking and talking, and the whole time Foggy couldn't think of one thing to do to help Matt. Call the Avengers? He didn't know who else dealt with this sort of thing. This had to be some superpowered wacko with messed up powers, right? No way it was actually a demon.

While the thing kept rambling on, Matt's hands picked up a knife laying on the floor near the couch. There were a lot silverware laying around the general vicinity, as if Az had just chucked the contents of the drawer over the counter. Then Foggy saw the actual drawer laying a short distance away, and realized they had thrown the entire drawer over the counter.

"See? Like this? Matt's doing this - do you know why? I don't really care - can't feel pain, but it's weird, right? You picked quite a nut job for a friend," Az said, watching with detached interest as Matt starting pricking the palm of his hand with the knife.

Foggy perked up - that was Matt? Moving his hands, cutting himself with the tip of the knife. Was Matt aware Foggy was there? Was it some sort of message? Or was he just trying to attack the person controlling his body? For a terrible moment Foggy was afraid he would use the knife to slit his wrists - Matt would surely hate the idea of someone using his body to kill people. He would see suicide as a necessary sacrifice, or something. But no, he just kept pricking the palm of his hand, over and over. Az watched for a few seconds, then shrugged and focused on Foggy again.

"I got most of the basic information on you when Matt passed out - but everything else has been kind of dodgy. I saw a memory of a boxer - like, actually saw it. So Matt wasn't always blind? How did that happen?"

"It's none of your business," Foggy hissed, clenching his fists so his nails dug into his palm. He felt so helpless. He didn't know what to do, but stand there and seethe in rage.

Not-Matt frowned, "See, this is what I meant by a bore. Which is what you're being, by the way."

"I won't let you have Matt."

Az laughed, a laugh that was distinctly not Matt's.

"I'd like to see what you're going to do about it, little mortal."

Foggy opened his mouth, then choked on his empty words. There was nothing he could do. Not now. Not by himself.

Az-Matt stood and stalked over to Foggy, their smile becoming dangerous. They stopped Matt's body just a few inches away from him - he could feel Matt's breath on his neck.

"That's what I thought," it said.

Foggy grit his teeth.

Then suddenly Matt's hand darted out and grabbed Foggy's sleeve, wrapping tightly around his wrist, squeezing so hard he was sure it would leave a bruise.

"Oh, hello," Az said in surprise, looking at the hand grabbing Foggy with raised eyebrows.

Then suddenly Foggy was standing back on the street outside, Matt's building to his back.

He stumbled a bit, surprised to find himself suddenly on the sidewalk. Matt wasn't anywhere in sight - had he just teleported Foggy out? Had Matt teleported him away, or had that other thing?

Either way, Foggy wasn't going anywhere. He wasn't going to leave Matt alone, not like this.

He rushed back to the door, but when he lifted his hand to open the door, he noticed something on his sleeve.

It was bloodstains, from the cuts Matt had pricked into his own palm with the knife. Several small dots, arranged in a pattern. Some of them were spreading into each other, but Foggy still recognized it.

Braille.

Matt had pricked braille into his own flesh, then given it to Foggy with his blood. A message.

Foggy fumbled for his phone, careful not to smear the blood on his sleeve, then took a photo before anything happened and the message was lost.

Then he looked at the dots - he had tried to learn braille back in college, but never could pick it up.

After looking up a Braille translation page on google, he figured out what Matt had been trying to tell him, in the only way he could.

"Father Lantom."

6. Chapter 6

_Thanks everyone for reading! And especially thanks to everyone who has followed/faved. You are the BEST and I love you. Also, special thanks to everyone who left reviews - I love reading your feedback! It really encourages me to keep writing! So here's another chapter - things are getting real. I promise the Winchesters are going to show up eventually, and it will start getting into the main plot/mystery soon. I hope you like it! _

_Without any further ado _

* * *

><p>Matt hoped Foggy understood the message.<p>

He knew he would be able to translate the braille - Father Lantom - but he hoped Foggy would understand what Matt wanted him to do. What he needed.

An exorcism.

"There you go again! What was all that about? I thought you had checked out," Azirale asked, moving to the window to search the street below for Foggy. Matt had teleported him to the other side of the building, though - they wouldn't be able to see him from here. He still wasn't absolutely certain how he was accessing these demonic powers. It was more an intense feeling of focused intent, and then things just happened. But he had managed to get Foggy out. And he hoped - prayed - that Foggy would have the sense to go to the church instead of coming back inside.

He needed Father Lantom.

And he needed Foggy far, far away from Azirale.

"What's up with the self-mutilation?" Azirale said, holding up their hand and studying the dots.

Matt panicked for a moment, but he concentrated on keeping his wall up so Azirale - or _Az_ - wouldn't know. He couldn't let the demon figure out what Matt was planning.

"What's up with the cute nickname? Az?"

Az harrumphed, successfully distracted.

"I think it sounds cool," they whined.

"It sounds a lot like ass. Which is fitting."

"AZ. Zzzz! You have to pronounce the Z," Az huffed, walking Matt's body back towards the couch and flopping onto the cushions with a

sigh.

"Your friend Foggy was not very entertaining. Annoyingly loyal and conscientious. The righteous fury and utter helplessness was an interesting combination, though. He smells nice. I mean, I already knew that - but he obviously hadn't showered before coming over here. Do you choose your friends based on their natural body odor? You have to have a different basis for meeting people other than their looks, after all," Az was rambling, mentally poking at Matt's mental wall.

But Matt had always been good at dividing and conquering. And now that he had a plan, he could focus again.

He let part of his wall crumble at Az's words, letting a few memories of meeting people in bars, at college, on dates, seep through - he let his first impressions and sensations ooze through the wall, tantalizing Az with the detailed memories. They jumped at the bait.

"So! The scent has something to do with it! Oh, she smelled nice. And you really can smell everything, can't you?"

Matt put up a seemingly feeble attempt at a mental block, but in reality he let Azirale into the small space of memories to explore and dissect at their leisure. While the demon was busy in his head, Matt concentrated his true attention elsewhere - his hands.

The bloody braille message was still there, cut into his skin.

He knew Az couldn't read braille on their own, not without accessing Matt's knowledge. And Matt could block him on that - but the demon could figure it out on his own if he put enough effort into it. He needed to erase the message.

Easier said than done - the letters were literally carved in flesh and blood. He couldn't just erase it. But he could disguise it.

While Az was preoccupied, Matt picked up the knife and began pricking his palm again. He just needed to add a few more dots to make the letters meaningless patterns. It was strange, to feel the pressure of the knife on his skin, piercing it, drawing blood - but no pain.

He guessed that was a pro to being possessed by a demonic spirit.

He shook his head - he could not think like that. There were no pros to this.

Or rather, he tried to shake his head. The movement played out jerky and stiff - he wasn't in full command of his body.

The sudden action drew Az's attention.

"What are you doing? What's with the knife again?"

"Testing."

"Testingâ€¦?"

"Pain response. Healing. Seeing what these demon powers can do."

"No pain doesn't equal healing. You're still messing your body up."

Matt slowly placed the knife on the table, "Good to know."

"But you seem to have a pretty good grasp on the rest of this - teleporting, telekinesis, super strength. It's pretty nice, right?"

"No," Matt answered. His heart jumped.

Az pulled his face into a grin.

"_No_," Matt repeated. His heart remained steady.

Az pulled his lips into a pout.

"Well, I think it's nice. Especially in your body - we've got a lot of potential. We make a good team."

"No, we don't. We're dangerous."

"Are you still upset that we killed those bastards?"

Matt felt something twist deep inside him - not in his body, but in his soul. He tried not to focus on it; he didn't need to wallow in guilt right now. There would be time for that later.

"Of course I'm upset. I said no killing."

Az sighed, cutting off the end of Matt's sentence. It was inconvenient for both sides of a conversation to be coming from the same mouth, but it felt more comfortable to talk out loud than for the conversation to be happening in his head. It made him feel a little more sane.

"Okay, fine. No more killing, _I promise_. Can we go now?"

Matt balked, "We're not going anywhere!"

"I said no more-"

"It's early morning. Daredevil goes out at night."

"But he's been known to make special appearances."

"Not today."

"Are you seriously going to make us sit motionless in your floor for hours again? That was so boring!"

Matt settled down, stiffly crossing his legs, resisting the hum of energy in his limbs that made him want to run, to jump, to climb the walls. He was stronger than this.

...

...

...

He was not stronger than this.

He wouldn't let Az put the mask on and jump out the window, but he couldn't stop the demon from pacing the apartment, digging through all his possessions several times over, putting on a number of Matt's records in quick succession - breaking several by tossing them over their shoulder when they didn't like the song.

"Let's go out," Az said suddenly, crouched in the corner of the apartment wearing Jack's old boxing gloves, listening to the neighbors two floors down argue about the health codes of Chinese fisheries. Apparently the conversation had grown old.

"_No," _Matt said mentally. He was tired. So tired.

"I don't mean as Daredevil - let's just go out. Your apartment is boring."

"And do what?" Matt decided to humor them.

"I don't know. Grab a bite? See a show?"

Matt hummed dismissively.

"Go investigate that warehouse where we met? Where you fought all the guys under the spell."

That got Matt's attention, "What?"

"You know - when I possessed you. Weren't you looking into Bouvois' warehouse?"

"You know about Bouvois?"

Az grinned, "I know more than you."

"_And I'll let you in on all of it, if we go out," _they finished in Matt's mind.

Matt hesitated.

"Just to check things out," Matt finally acquiesced.

"Just to check things out," Az agreed earnestly.

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...

A cool breeze whispered through the warm air and brush against Matt's bare skin. It felt odd to be out in the city so exposed; usually he was in the Daredevil suit - which didn't exactly breathe well - or in a stiff lawyer suit that breathed even less.

Right now they were wearing jeans and a soft t-shirt that Matt recognized by touch. Az had scattered all his clothes on the floor, rendering the braille tagging system useless. This outfit wasn't exactly fashionable or protective, but at least he knew it looked okay. He didn't want to draw any unnecessary attention.

"We're out. Tell me about Bouvois, and those men," Matt said into empty air.

They were sitting on a bench across the street from the warehouse, glasses on and cane resting against one leg. A few cars drove past, but the street wasn't a very busy one. There were a few people a couple buildings down, unloading a truck and carrying boxes into another warehouse. A homeless man was asleep in the bus stop a few yards away.

Everything seemed very innocuous.

Including the warehouse across the street. It was empty.

Completely empty. It was a void.

Matt concentrated his senses into the warehouse, but couldn't pick up anything - not even the echo of a large empty room. Not the smell of dust or mildew. It was a black hole, sucking his senses in and giving nothing back.

"Well, she's a witch."

Matt tried not to show his surprise. He didn't really have any room for disbelief here - he was currently sharing his body with a honest-to-god demon.

"A witch."

"Evangeline Bouvois. She's kind of a bigshot. Been around awhile. She has a lot of demons in her employ. Not me, though - I never cared for working for a human like that. Even as part of a contract."

"And the men?"

"Attack Dog spell. She sicced them on you."

The name of the Attack Dog spell was pretty self explanatory.

"Why?"

"I'm assuming you were turning over stones she didn't want turned."

Matt had a lot of questions. What exactly were witches capable of? Were they more powerful than demons? How had she even known Daredevil was investigating - he hadn't made any obvious moves against her yet. Foiled some of her kidnapping schemes, perhaps, as well as her less-direct criminal enterprises - but he hadn't made a move against her personally.

"What's she doing in the city?"

Az hummed, "That I don't know. Didn't really want to know - still don't. She's up to something big, and that means we should stay out of it."

That was the wrong thing to say if Az wanted Matt to stay out of it. Something big, something evil, something demonic - in his city. He wasn't going to stand aside and let that fester, not if he could do anything about it. He clenched his fist, and his heart beat a little faster.

He expected Az to object, or complain, but the demon remained oddly quiet for once. Like he was studying Matt's reaction all of the sudden.

Matt made to stand, but Az held their body down, so they ended up just half-hopping awkwardly on the bench before sitting tensely on the edge of the seat.

"We need to get closer - my senses can't pick anything up from here."

"I thought we were just checking things out," Az countered.

"We are. Plus, you were the one who wanted to get out."

"I'm serious, Matt - we shouldn't get involved."

For a moment that sounded like actual concern.

"Then you should have stayed behind," Matt mumbled, forcing their body to rise and take a step towards the warehouse.

"_You wonder why you can't sense anything in there? That warehouse is safeguarded with layers and layers of spells and enchantments and wards - we aren't going to be able to get in. Getting close won't accomplish anything except put us in danger," _Azirale hissed, loud and frantic in Matt's head.

Matt had felt the strange aura from the building before - so that's what magic felt like. Buzzing over his skin like wasps, washing over him like dry heat the closer he got to the building. All signs screaming at him to _stay away! _

"I need to know what's going on in there," Matt stated, determined.

"Then stake it out later tonight, or something. But please, don't make us go any closer. We've already been here too long."

Matt's stunned for a moment. Az was actually asking him to do this - not threatening, not taking over his body, not making some snide remark - but asking. Begging. It threw him off guard.

"Yeah, good idea," Matt said. Half because, yeah, it was a good idea - as much as he hated to admit it, Az knew more about magic and spells and demons than Matt. If Bouvois really was a witch, Matt would need Az's knowledge to get to the bottom of this.

And half because, well - Az said please. Matt didn't know how to respond to such an earnest, honest request from a demon.

He was so stunned, in fact, that at first he didn't register the fact that someone was walking out of the warehouse.

Az noticed immediately, and flipped them behind the bench with a curse, ducking behind the ugly, metal thing - heart beating nearly out of their chest.

"_Who's that?" _Matt asked.

"_Another demon. One of Bouvois' minions," _Az answered_. _

The demon was housed in the body of a heavy-set woman wearing a leather jacket. Matt recognized the familiar signs of demon possession - steady heartbeat, stinking of sulfur and blood, and now that he knew what magic felt like, he could sense a similar sensation coming off of this woman. Demon. Whatever.

But now that he had Azirale, he didn't need any of that to determine the woman was possessed - he could distinguish between the demon and its human vessel. The demon was a swirling mass of darkness, a negative space in Matt's sense. It stank like dead bodies, smoke, sulfur and rotten blood. There was a second form overlaying the woman's body, insubstantial, like a mist or a shroud, but that pulsed and seethed with some form of life - it was the furthest thing from human Matt had ever witnessed. With a sick feeling, he realized he was the same as this woman. There was the disgusting, seething, darkness within himself, as well.

"_Yeah, we're not lovely to look at," _Az said, "_But I guess you can't really look at us."_

"_Same difference. Why haven't I...I never noticed you, in that way," _Matt replied mentally.

"_That's because we have a special connection," _Az joked, but without his usual enthusiasm.

The demon on the steps of the warehouse had paused in its descent, sniffing the air and moving its head around, looking for something. It had sensed them.

"_We need to go," _Az said.

For once, Matt agreed.

Matt felt his skin prickle, tingling like static on the radio, and his gut drop as they teleported - he prepared himself for the dizzying sensation of suddenly appearing in a different location.

But they didn't move.

"Az?" Matt whispered aloud. The demon on the steps was staring at their hiding spot, "Why aren't we going?"

"I can't."

"What?"

"I think...I think she has more wards on the street, not just the warehouse."

"Are we trapped here?"

"No - we'll just have to do this the old fashioned way. At least until we get out of the area she's enchanted."

The demon on the steps was walking towards them.

"The old fashioned way, then," Matt said, and he and Azirale nodded in unison.

Together they sprinted out from behind the bench, tearing down the street at superhuman speed. The demon shouted something out and immediately gave pursuit.

Unfortunately, whatever spell was preventing Matt and Az from teleporting didn't seem to affect her.

She suddenly appeared in front of them, clotheslining them with an arm that felt like it was made of iron. Matt's body slammed into the ground, then quickly rolled to the side as the demon's foot came down to stomp their ribs. Instead, she just left a small crack in the pavement.

They hopped to their feet, slowly moving to the side, circling the other demon with a growl.

She circled right back, moving to mirror their own movements. She grinned.

"We just want to leave," Az said, and their fingers twitched.

"Then you shouldn't have come here in the first place. How do we know you aren't working for Crowley?"

"We?" Matt asked, then as if on cue two more demons appeared. One of was in the body of a tall, slim male, the other was short but well-muscled. They both lunged for Matt at the same moment, but Matt and Az leapt into the air, kicking off the short one's shoulder and launching away from the ambush.

They landed with a roll, then were immediately running again. The three demons - Stocky, Slim, and Shortstack - followed. Matt and Az fell into that now familiar rhythm whenever they were fighting or running, their minds and muscles falling in sync, working together effortlessly. There weren't any walls here - they couldn't afford them.

Slim caught up to Matt/Az and tried to tackle them, but they ducked beneath the clumsy swipe and delivered a kick to the demon's stomach - Slim stumbled back, but then Stocky was there, her fist coming down towards Matt's face. Their arms came up and caught her wrist, but couldn't stop the downward momentum. Instead, they redirected the blow over their shoulder and came up beneath her, flipping her body over their back and slamming her to the ground.

Something rang behind them - grating metal and bells - a knife. They heard the blade being flipped out, held in the hands of Shortstack.

The demon lunged at Matt's back with the knife, but Matt/Az fell forward into a roll and dodged the attack.

Unfortunately, Stocky's hand reached out and snagged Matt's ankle before they could spring back to their feet, causing them faceplant into the sidewalk.

Behind them, Shortstack was tripping forward, overbalanced by their lunge with the knife.

The demon fell, readjusting their grip on the knife as they came down towards Matt's prone figure. Matt/Az tried to roll away, but Stocky had a better grip on their leg now, and Slim had his boot pressing down on Matt's shoulder, pinning him to the ground.

Matt felt the cold metal pierce the skin of his back, slide through his muscle, glance off his ribs, sink through his heart, come back out his chest and clink against the pavement. He felt the blade stab through his heart. He felt it - but it didn't hurt.

"Idiot! Stabbing him in the heart won't do anything - cut his tendons, so he can't run," Stocky was saying.

"Don't mess up a good vessel for no reason - we just need the demon," Slim said.

"He's already messed up," Stocky said.

"Sorry," Shortstack said, obviously not sorry.

Matt couldn't focus on their voices, their words. He couldn't focus on what he could hear - only on what he couldn't. His heartbeat, always there, steady and strong - was silent. His heart wasn't pumping. His veins had stopped coursing. The air had left from his lungs. He felt himself getting smaller, fading from his body with a buzzing scream echoing in the space around him.

The world outside was just as loud as always - but inside, everything had gone silent.

"Huurrngnnn!" suddenly Az was growling, then roaring, summoning a burst of strength and throwing the demons off Matt's body with a shout. They lifted Matt's body up off the ground, the blood covering his chest squelching slightly, making his t-shirt stick to his skin.

Matt didn't know what Az was doing - he just let them do it. He couldn't do anything else. He was...dead? He was dead. His body was dead, at least. He was still here, somehow.

Az was fighting. They grabbed Slim's leg and snapped it across their knee like firewood. Stocky was on them instantly, but Az threw her again - this time pointedly slamming her head into the ground, snapping her neck. When she fell to the ground, Az stomped on her lower back and ground his foot in until they heard another snap.

Shortstack was back with the knife, this time swiping towards Matt's legs.

Matt joined Az in the fight, more out of habit than anything. His mind wasn't present, he wasn't really there, it was just muscle memory. But he was there, helping move his cold, dead muscles as they jabbed his fingers into Shortstack's eyes. His other hand grabbed the hand holding the knife and twisted it around until the bones in the wrist screamed and the knife fell from spasming fingers. Az caught the knife and brought Matt's knee up into Shortstack's gut, bending him double and slashing at the backs of his knees.

Fighting demons wasn't about causing pain, it was about physical incapacitation. Their bodies wouldn't stop moving until they were broken. To them, the human body was just a delicate machine - snap the right wires, break the right gears, and it won't operate correctly, no matter how much power you course into it.

Apparently, a beating heart wasn't necessary to keep the machine moving - not nearly as important as hamstrings.

When the demons didn't get back up - though they tried, their bodies just wouldn't work in tandem with their wishes - Az bolted.

Matt felt his muscles pulling and pushing, tensing beneath his skin like everything was normal. Like blood wasn't oozing from his chest - not spurting or coursing, because his heart wasn't beating. It was just spilling out, like a broken milk carton.

He was vaguely aware when the slight buzzing sensation left the air around them - he hadn't noticed it when they first approached the warehouse, it was so slight. But now that he knew to look for it, he could tell they just left the area influenced by Bouvois' enchantment.

"Matt, you there?" Az asked, panting.

That was weird, Matt thought abstractly - demons didn't get out of breath.

"_Matt?_" Az was in his mind, searching for Matt.

Matt didn't want him in there.

"I'm dead, aren't I?" he said, clumsily, his words slurred.

"Your body is - but you're still here," Az said, sounding...relieved?

"Howâ€¦" Matt trailed off, but Az answered anyway.

"It's because I'm possessing you. As long as I'm here, your body won't die. You won't die."

"And if you leave?"

"Then you'll die - all of you will die - pretty much immediately."

Matt swallowed - and he actually swallowed, he could still do that. His body was still obeying him. Still moving. Functioning, somehow. It made no sense.

"How? How am I -"

"This isn't science. It's a curse. Don't ask how it works - you should just be grateful."

"I should be grateful that you got me killed?" Matt felt anger surge through him.

"Grateful that I'm keeping you alive. That I got us out of there," Az answered, their tone just as biting.

Matt wanted to cry. He wanted to scream. He wanted to punch something until his knuckles bled. He wanted to give into the rising panic clawing at the edge of his mind, to the rage and grief and anger at how unfair this was and how stupid he was. He wanted Az to have a physical form so he could strangle the demon. He wanted to go back and kill the demons that had done this him.

Instead, he just said, "Let's go home."

The world spun around him for a moment, then he was standing back in the familiar confines of his apartment. There was his counter, his cabinets. Smelling of coffee ground and beer. The refrigerator humming its same old tune. His couch. His table. His bed.

Foggy.

Father Lantom.

"Matt?"

"Foggy?" Matt rasped, but suddenly something was splashing against his skin, burning like acid, biting and chewing him up like tiny, toxic teeth. He and Azirale let out a shout, falling to their knees.

"Wha...what?" Matt panted.

He heard it now - water, sloshing in a small bottle Father Lantom was holding. The priest's heart was beating rapidly, his breathing tight and constricted as he faced Matt. Flung the water towards Matt again, and the burning returned - was his priest attacking him with acid? He couldn't think straight - he couldn't think past the pain, past his panic, past his fear.

Az could, though.

"Stop it, you decrepit old bastard, you don't know what-" Az started, but Lantom splashed them again, and they let out a howl and slammed their head to the ground, fingers clenched up in Matt's hair.

"Wait, you're hurting him!" Foggy's voice cut through the pain, trembling and afraid.

"It won't hurt Matt, only the demon," Father Lantom answered, "We need to start the exorcism, before it has a chance to do any more harm."

"_Fuck. You really are Catholic," _Az hissed in Matt's mind.

Matt's mind finally snapped back into place - his plan had worked. Foggy had gone to his church and convinced Father Lantom to come help. He had arranged an exorcism. It was all going just as Matt had hoped.

Right now, though, he echoed Az's sentiments.

"Fuck."

End
file.